



Executive Advisory Body

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 16 November 2021
Time	10.00 – 12:30
Location	Video conference

Attendees

Present

David Wallace (DW)	Chief Executive, Social Security Scotland
Chris Creegan (CC)	Non-Executive Member (Chair)
Laura Brennan-Whitefield (LBW)	Non-Executive Member
Elaine Noad (EN)	Non-Executive Member
Barry Matheson (BM)	Non-Executive Member
Naghat Ahmed (NA)	Non-Executive Member
Russell Frith (RF)	Non-Executive Member
Andy McClintock (AMC)	Chief Digital Officer
Paul Knight (PK)	Chief Officer Health and Social Care Operations
James Wallace (JW)	Deputy Director of Finance and Corporate Services
Miriam Craven (MC)	Deputy Director of Strategy, Change, Data and Engagement
Janet Richardson (JR)	Deputy Director of Client Services Delivery
AM	Head of Corporate Services

In Attendance

Ben Macpherson MSP	Minister for Social Security and Local Government
GD	Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications
JH	Security Operations Manager
AM	Governance Manager

Observing

SS	National Engagement and Partnership Lead
HJ	Operational Policy & Decision Support Team Manager



Secretariat

Assistant Governance Manager

1. Welcome and Conflicts of Interest

- 1.1. The Chair, Chris Creegan (CC), welcomed and thanked everyone for their attendance.
- 1.2. CC formally welcomed the Minister for Social Security and Local Government, Ben Macpherson MSP to the meeting today.
- 1.3. CC noted Paul Knight (PK) will leave the meeting early and welcomed SS and HJ who were observing today's meeting.
- 1.4. Members did not highlight any potential conflicts of interest.

2. Minister for Social Security and Local Government, Ben Macpherson MSP

- 2.1. CC invited the Minister for Social Security and Local Government, Ben Macpherson, to provide an update in relation to Social Security Scotland's priorities and challenges ahead.
- 2.2. The Minister thanked the Executive Advisory Body for the invitation to attend today's meeting and welcomed Barry Matheson, Naghat Ahmed and Russell Frith, newly appointed Non Executives to the Executive Advisory Body.
- 2.3. The Minister noted the following;

The publication of the [Annual Report and Accounts](#) and [Charter Measurement Framework](#), passing his thanks to Social Security Scotland colleagues for all their hard work.

Challenges ahead – specifically in maintaining the impressive levels of satisfaction as bigger more complex benefits are introduced and the transfer of existing cases from the Department for Work and Pensions, whilst embedding the Scottish benefits already introduced. Throughout all this the Minister noted we will continue to pay benefits without interruption as a priority.

Broader priorities – to tackle poverty, child poverty in particular, as well as trying to create a more equal society. The Minister noted how immensely proud he was of Scottish Child Payment, transformative action that will lift thousands of children out of poverty. However, scope for action in these areas is constrained by the limits on Scottish Government powers, including tax powers.

Broadened support for people on low incomes, ensuring they receive the full level of financial support they are entitled too. This commitment comes with a strong focus on income maximisation, supported by the recent launch of our [Benefits Take-up Strategy](#).



Social Security Scotland priorities include the national introduction of Child Disability Payment and Adult Disability Payment.

- 2.4. The Minister noted he wants to ensure Social Security Scotland has the people to realise our ambitions and strengthen our foundations in line with our core values of dignity, fairness and respect. This was an investment in the infrastructure of a new public service. The Minister did note however that we will continue to be prudent with public money and will exercise appropriate scrutiny and challenge functions.
- 2.5. CC thanked the Minister for his update.

3. Social Security Scotland Human Resources Report – Quarter ending 30 September 2021

- 3.1. CC invited AM to speak to the Social Security Scotland Human Resources Report. AM noted the paper summarises key people data metrics for the quarter ending 30 September 2021 and the activity taking place within Social Security Scotland's people function.
- 3.2. AM noted the report is provided on a quarterly basis to allow the Executive Advisory Body to note the changes in the staffing profile of the organisation in line with the benefits being delivered and the activities being carried out within the People function to support that delivery.
- 3.3. AM advised that the data metrics are published on a quarterly basis on the [Scottish Government website](#). This set of data will be published in December 2021 and is therefore not in the public domain as yet.
- 3.4. AM noted the report provides information on various data metrics around headcount, wellbeing, diversity and inclusion and highlighted the following:
 - Social Security Scotland currently has over 1,500 directly employed staff, within those numbers almost two thirds, 62%, of these staff are based in Glasgow, just under 29% are based in Dundee and 9% are based in other locations. The imbalance as a result of recruitment decisions made to support the launch of Scottish Child Payment. At that time the Glasgow estate was able to accommodate greater numbers and staff were recruited in line with available space. It was also acknowledged that historically it has been easier to recruit in Glasgow due to the size of the population and labour market but that Dundee did in fact have a higher proportion of emolument relative to its size. Current recruitment campaigns have an objective of addressing the imbalance – labour markets allowing .
 - Staff turnover shows an upward trend from a low base from September 2020 to September 2021. The organisation is now 3 years old, it's natural that staff who have been in post for a number of years will start to seek other opportunities. AM noted that some level of turnover is a sign of a healthy organisation.



- 3.5. CC thanked AM for the detailed report and invited questions from the Executive Advisory Body.
- 3.6. The Executive Advisory Body were pleased with the detail in the report and noted the following;
- A further breakdown would be beneficial to highlight if stress/ anxiety related absence is due to work related stress or home related stress.
 - As mental health is the leading cause of absence nationally, can we ensure sufficient training is given to staff involved in rolling out new benefits to ensure they have the relevant knowledge to have ‘difficult’ conversations. AM advised this is a key consideration. Alongside learning to prepare for these types of conversation a Buddy system, which provides new colleagues with a virtual network of support, and additional support services have been introduced and managers aware of the need to monitor the wellbeing of their staff.
 - Could AM consider the data presented today and provide another substantive update on the key areas for Social Security Scotland in six months.
- 3.7. AM advised a further update will come to the Executive Advisory Body which will cover the additional detail as noted above.

Action	AM	To provide an update in six months, to include points noted above.
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4. Social Security Scotland Cyber Security

- 4.1. CC invited Andy McClintock (AMC) to introduce the Social Security Scotland Cyber Security item. AMC advised Cyber Security is a key piece of work for Social Security Scotland. The aim of today’s discussion is to take a tailored focus of the National Cyber Security Centre’s Board Toolkit and consider our capabilities, our security levels and how Social Security Scotland is supporting cyber security.
- 4.2. JH illustrated the capabilities of the Digital Risk and Security Team which was established in May 2017.
- 4.3. JH noted cyber-attacks remain our primary security concern and that cyber resilience is the key to protecting our systems due to the sophistication of threats, with the focus on detection, response and recovery.
- 4.4. JH noted the five questions set out in the National Cyber Security Centre Board Toolkit and provided details of Social Security Scotland’s response to these questions.
- 4.5. JH advised the National Cyber Security Centre Board Toolkit provides a general introduction to cyber security with separate sections that explain the individual aspects of cyber security along with a summary of the legal and regulatory



duties. JH invited questions and asked if the Executive Advisory Body was content with the approach being taken.

4.6. The Executive Advisory Body thanked JH for the detailed update and noted the following;

- To provide more information regarding Social Security Scotland capacity to monitor systems when colleagues are working from home.
- To continue the work to support business continuity, this will in turn ensure resilience to recover from a cyber-attack.
- To consider a lessons learned exercise from cyber-attacks on other agencies, for Example the attack on the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.

4.7. The Executive Advisory Body endorse the approach to use the National Cyber Security Centre’s Board Toolkit and asked AMC to conduct an assessment of our capabilities to provide assurance to the board and to provide an further update in 2022.

Action	AMC	To conduct an assessment of capabilities and provide an update in 2022.
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5. Social Security Scotland Audit and Assurance Committee Minutes – 21 September 2021

5.1. CC invited Russell Frith (RF) to update Members on the discussion at the most recent Audit and Assurance Committee meeting and provide a brief summary.

5.2. RF advised that notes of the meeting were accurately recorded in the minutes.

5.3. The Executive Advisory Body noted and agreed for the record the Audit and Assurance Committee Minutes from 21 September 2021.

Decision	-	The Executive Advisory Body noted for the record the Audit and Assurance Committee Minutes from 21 September 2021
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6. Chief Executive Update

6.1. David Wallace (DW) noted the following:

- The Budget Position for 2022-23 – DW noted Social Security Scotland continued to work with Social Security Directorate, and Scottish Government Finance to agree the Budget for 2022-23. Discussions continue in this space.



- Reflections on the Social Security Committee visit to Agnes Husband House – DW noted the visit was very helpful and extended his thanks to Social Security Scotland colleagues for all their work and support.
- DW advised he will be attending the Social Justice and Social Security Committee Evidence Session on the 2 December 2021, with Miriam Craven (MC) and James Wallace (JW).
- [The Scottish Public Sector Awards](#) – DW was pleased to advise that Social Security Scotland has been nominated for the following awards;
 - The Campbell Christie Public Service Reform Award – Joint nomination for Social Security Scotland and Social Security Directorate
 - The Communications Award - Five Family Payments campaign, Social Security Scotland
- The People Survey 2021 – DW advised that the People Survey 2021 had now closed. At present there are no results to share but a deep dive session has been arranged for January 2022.

7. Any other Business

- 7.1. The Executive Advisory Body endorsed the minutes from the last meeting on the 5 October 2021.
- 7.2. The members noted receipt of the following papers which had been included as below the line items for information.
- Social Security Scotland Counter Fraud, Error and Debt 2021-22 Quarter 2 Report
 - Social Security Scotland Corporate Risk Register
 - Social Security Scotland Register of Compliance
 - Social Security Scotland Performance Update to the end of September 2021 – Elaine Noad (EN) advised she had a couple of questions in relation to the Performance Report which will be sent via correspondence to Janet Richardson (JR).
 - Social Security Scotland Finance Report
- 7.3. No further business was noted.
- 7.4. CC thanked everybody for attending the meeting.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 8 February 2022



Action(AP)/Decision(DP)	Detail	Owner	Due Date	Status
AP – 05/10/2021 – 03	Once recruitment is complete the demographics on diversity are to be shared with the Executive Advisory Body.	AM	8 February 2022	Open
AP – 05/10/2021 – 04	To share the People Survey results with the Executive Advisory Body in the new year 2022.	Secretariat	8 February 2022	Open
AP – 05/10/2021 – 05	More detailed Child Disability Payment progress update for the Executive Advisory Body including the points noted in the minutes.	JR	8 February 2022	Open
AP – 16/11/2021 - 01	To provide an update in six months, to include points noted above.	AM	3 May 2022	Open
AP – 16/11/2021 - 01	To conduct an assessment of capabilities and provide an update in 2022.	AMC	8 February 2022	Open
DP – 16/11/2021 – 01	The Executive Advisory Body noted and formally agreed for the record the Audit and Assurance Committee Minutes from 21 September 2021.	-	-	Noted